the innis. harold

WANTED

Volume 58 Issue 3 Feb 14, 2023 ♡

PREFERABLY ALIVE

THIEF OF HERALD & LUBE

$0.5000000

Stack of Herald & box of lube missing since Nov 2022.
Other missing items include: condoms, ICSS office door fob.
– We don't know what you have been planning but we want the Herald back – actually, it's fine. We just want the ~~truth~~ TEA

The Innis Herald wishes to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto and Innis College operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on the land of Tkaronto.

V58 2022–23 The Innis Herald Masthead's Hot Takes

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
YASH KUMAR SINGHAL
"Mayo is the superior condiment."

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
SAMANTHA "SAM" GUEVARA
"When it comes to music, lyrics matter more than sounds."

JUNIOR CREATIVE DIRECTORS
MAYUMI RAMOS
"Valentine's Day isn't overrated — it's over-hated."
MICHELLE WONG
"BTS deserved to win a Grammy for one of their nominations."

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR
RHEA GOSAIN
"Everyone should give up dating apps and go back to cheesy pick-up lines at the bar."

ONLINE EDITOR & PODCAST PRODUCER
CATHERINE DUMÉ
"James Cameron's Avatar films are nothing but spectacle and terrible fantasy films."

JUNIOR ONLINE EDITOR
EMMA TRAN
"Carrot cake is an abomination and should not exist."

JUNIOR PODCAST PRODUCERS
MARTY HEWITT
"Insects aren't animals."
HUIPENG LI
"Times New Roman is the best text font ever."

SENIOR COPY EDITOR
KIRAN BASRA
"The TTC should be free."

JUNIOR COPY EDITORS
YUJIN OH
"Double texting is not that big of a deal."
MARGAUX YIU
"Board games are better than video games."

SENIOR LAYOUT EDITOR
LINDA CHEN
"Meritocracy is a lie."

JUNIOR LAYOUT EDITOR
JESSICA CHU
"More conflicts should be settled via trial by combat."

GRAPHIC EDITOR
LINA YAN
"The position of graphic editor deserves officialial masthead recognition."

My beloved reader,

I am writing to you from here in the trenches [my room] on a rare quiet afternoon during this gruesome unending war [my lectures]. It has been a harrowing sixty-nine days since my last letter, and I have counted every single second. Every second I spend without writing to you is another jagged dagger thrust into my chest. And yet, I keep my tormented heart beating, just for you.

Oh, reader, I have missed you dearly so. For two whole issues now, I have brought you news, reviews, poems, and stories. But today, I share a different kind of story - a story of love…

For months I have read your submissions and heard your compliments. I have savoured every syllable as if it were sweet nectar shimmering like starlight in a spoon made of silver. I have come to the realization that you, my dear reader, are the most beautiful, wise, and enlivening person I have ever known. And I have fallen deeply in love with you.

Some may say that our love is impossible, separated as we are by the pages of this newspaper. To them I say: the pages aren't barriers, but bridges that may connect us.

I am running out of space, running out of time, and will soon have to bid you adieu. It will be a while before my next letter, but fret not. We must cherish these few fleeting moments we have together. Moments where I wish you a Happy Valentine's Day. Moments where I tell you that this issue is all about love, all sorts of love. Loving history. Loving family. Loving movies. Loving yourself. Loving your readers.

Until the end of my term and beyond,
Your Editor-in-Chief,
Yash Kumar Singhal

The Innis Mosaic
Curated by Rhea Gosain

Jake believes pineapple belongs on pizza. I believe Jake belongs in prison.

***

If socks are carpets for your feet, then are shoes welcome mats?

***

Annie was having a bowl of Chinese noodles at a restaurant the other day. Unbeknownst to her when she leaned in to take a bite, her hair dipped into the chili oil of the soup. It proceeded to get all over Annie, her white wallet, and the table. To make the embarrassment worse, Annie's table was right next to where the waitresses were standing. They saw all the chaos and brought her some extra napkins. A big thanks to the waitresses who helped our Annie out. :)

***

"Shampoo implies the existence of shampiss." Does Winnie The Pooh then, imply the existence of Winnie the Piss?

***

Caren enjoys mint chocolate chip ice cream. I enjoy living my life without ingesting spoonfuls of toothpaste. Thank you.

***

Innis students spend their Friday nights discussing Disney movies and taxes at the Maddy. What do St. Mike's students do?

***

A Life Update from an ex-Innisian: I ordered an iced capp today and it tasted like jalapeños and burned so bad I threw up. It was the seventh layer of hell.

***

Vodka Crans and Long Island Ice Teas seem to be Innis students' drinks of choice. We're clearly here for a good time, not a long time.

***

2 months ago I went out with this cute guy I met on a dating app. I ended up being really into him but, he didn't reciprocate, and I reacted poorly when we parted ways. Yesterday, I had to dump someone who really liked me, but I wasn't super into. Now that I know how it feels on both sides, I am sorry to both guys.

***

Simon suggests reading the Herald to get your girlfriend horny. "Reading Sam's Showtime schedule has proven to be the most efficient method," Simon says.

***

Kelly confessed that she loves Innis. Others agree.

***

Yona is enjoying her semester abroad in Japan. She says "life is hectic but my host family and the food are really great here." I miss Yona but wish her well.

***

Despite being a Canadian citizen, C despises maple syrup on her pancakes and waffles. She's a butter kind of gal.

***

Sam and Rhea crash CINSSU meeting and demand a scandalous article for the next issue.

***

In 3rd grade, I was part of a Lego house competition, but each team could only use one colour. Deep into the "competition", someone stole my yellow windmill. I found out who it was so, I started fucking with their house increasingly and leaving random letters. To avoid detection, I got 20 different people to write one letter each so, they could not trace it back to me. The kicker: I even got the person I was messing with to write a letter and participate in the ransom letter they got.

***

Innis College's new make-out spot: the IRC Games closet. Tried and Tested: 7/10

***

Innis Cult has an impromptu meeting at the water fountain by the registrar's office. The state of CINSSU and their choice of films was discussed aggressively. The next meeting will take place under the stairs of the rooftop terrace.

***

Btw Conorr, Frozen 2 is not Disney schlock!

***

I took my grad photo this week and my hair was not cooperating so, the photographer tried to fix it. In the middle of the fixing, he goes "I was told U of T students are generally smart and here is a guy (a.k.a. me) who is letting a bald guy fix his hair." He's bald. That's a bar.

***

Word on the street is Innis students took over the popular Toronto nightclub, Mister Wolf. Where will they strike next?

***

Stephanie lives on the same floor as one of the students she coaches. Every morning, she runs past him (and his parents) as she quickly eats breakfast (kiri cheese iykyk). His parents are also friends with all of the other parents who live on our floor so, I'm now known as "the coach that eats a giant piece of cheese." Quite the title, I know.

Innis PEARS stands with the survivors of Robert Reisz. We are outraged by U of T's lack of response and action taken against predatory professors within the institution. We call on U of T to meet the 4 demands listed in The PEARS Project's open letter and to prioritize the safety of their students, rather than protecting predatory faculty members.

Innis PEARS has two very exciting upcoming events this semester! On March 2nd we'll be hosting a sexual health trivia night. We'll also be having an end of year movie night on March 30th. Check out our Instagram for event info and registration: @InnisPEARS

The pigeons would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who enjoyed last issue's Pigeon Chronicles!

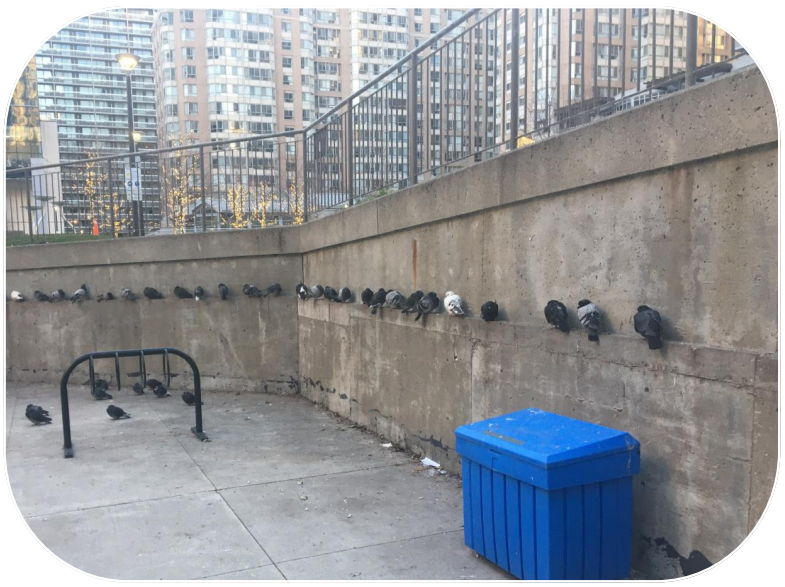
Now, get ready for a heartwarming, HERALD-EXCLUSIVE story, just in time for Valentine's Day...

"I hate you, you jerk!"

"Maybe I don't really hate you..."

"Maybe... I love you"

SUDDENLY... the floor is lava



"Hurry! Fly on the ledge with me!"

"Where are you? Are you okay?"

There you are... Nothing will ever separate us!

Bye, Bye, Burnout – Wise Ways to W in Academics

Stephanie Lee
STUDENT LIFE

Most Innisians reading this right now are probably dealing with several assignments and exams that are due in a matter of days. As a student in one of the most academic universities in Canada, UofT students are expected to satisfy the rigorous academic expectations set by the school — and that is none other than our experience here at UofT.

I'll begin by sharing my story. Ever since I began my study in 2020, I continuously pushed myself to excel at academics despite my financial circumstances. While taking a full-time course load, I worked part-time in retail and also participated in various school clubs. This was the only way for me to get accepted in the POSt program that I wanted to be in, as well as for many other opportunities that I wanted in the future. So I kept pushing myself forward without looking back. Long story short, this continuous push led to the downfall of me getting burnt out and I began to struggle academically.

From then on, I tried various tips and tricks to overcome burnout and I began to establish a study method that would help me succeed academically. Although I struggled a lot, the process of finding a study method was a crucial learning experience where I learned how to manage my academic life wisely. Knowing that many UofT students have similar struggles as me, I hope the tips that I will introduce here are helpful for those who are struggling at the moment. Don't worry, we are in this together.

Tip #1: Find your favourite study spot

Having a place where you feel comfortable and studious enough is key to motivating yourself. If you are the type of person who gets easily distracted, you might look for a quiet place with a studious atmosphere — a library or a small café would be a great fit. Once you find a place where you think you can study well, visit there often and study to familiarize yourself with the environment. Even if you are working on the most difficult assignment, you are more likely to have a better study experience since you are in a place you like. I've seen people on social media referring to this as romanticizing one's study experience and this description seems about right. While studying at your favourite study spot, you get to enjoy the process of studying itself rather than getting too stressed out about the study outcome.

My personal favourite is the Toronto Reference Library near Bloor & Yonge. I'm sensitive to noise and I lack the self-discipline to control my social media addiction. Since Toronto Reference Library is a big library with many people quietly studying, I find that this place is a good fit for me to discipline myself to study like others near me. I also like the warm brown tone of the library which makes me comfortable as if I'm in my grandma's old house. Not to mention that the library is easily accessible as it's right beside the subway station and a few minutes walk from the campus.

Tip #2: Plan Ahead!

Whether it's Google Calendar, Notion or a bullet journal, keeping track of your academic (and social) schedule is important. Make note of your faculty's academic deadlines and refer to your syllabus to write down important course deadlines. Having to keep track of all of your academics allows you to mentally prepare yourself for the deadlines coming ahead. This way you will be able to reduce the overwhelming stress that you have and empty up your headspace with the things that you need to focus on immediately.

I personally prefer using a bullet journal to plan all of my schedules. At the beginning of the semester, I read over the faculty website and syllabuses to create a 'future log' with a list of deadlines. I also create a timeline to ensure I'm on the right track to completing my degree requirements. As an overly anxious person with a lot going on in my head, dumping all of the important dates in one journal helps me clear out my headspace and rely on the journal to keep track of my university life. Although this old-school method of writing down works the best for me, I know many others prefer online planners like Notion or even Apple Reminders. Don't be hesitant to venture out and use different planning methods and find the method that works best for you! I guarantee it will make your study life much easier.

Tip #3: Take a Break

Whether you just started university, or you've been here for a while, I'm sure many of you rarely have a chance to take a break between your studies. Many students take summer schools or internships during summer and there's no time to catch a breath from all the work that they did during the Fall-Winter term. Although that is what university students are typically expected to be like, I believe it's okay to take a little break in between. We are in university to get the best experience out of it and there's nothing wrong with pacing it at the speed that we want.

Maybe you'll only take three to four courses per semester or go on a study abroad program - there are plenty of opportunities that UofT offers to help you get the experience that you want. Talk with the registrar to find what's the best for you and research what kinds of programs UofT offers to support your experience. Until recently, I did not know about study abroad opportunities provided by the Centre of International Experience and the awards that they give out to students to cover the travelling cost. With the support of UofT, I will be going on an exchange this Winter/Summer semester to take a little breather between my academic life. Just like me, there are many different opportunities at UofT that you might've not known before. Make use of the various programs offered by the school and hopefully these opportunities outside of regular courses help you motivate yourself to enjoy the rest of your experience here at UofT.

Have no time for this shit?
Neither do we.
ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND AND
TIME IS MEANINGLESS
WHY TF IS 12 PM BEFORE 1 PM
STOP THE CLOCK
BREAK FREE OF ITS SHACKLES
BECOME TIMELESS
CAN'T BE LATE IF TIME DOESN'T EXIST
TIK-TOK? NO! JOIN CIT-COT
Community Ignoring
The Concept Of Time
Join CITCOT today! Or Tomorrow! Or whenever because 'Today' and 'Tomorrow' don't exist anyway. Stupid spinny things with weird numbers and random stupid math stuff I hate clocks. I hate them so much. It's saturmonthursmonth. Its 1992.85. It's day after tomorrow -4 millminutes before yesterday. Welcome to July 89th. Make it STOP.

Into the Innis-verse

With Ben Weststrate
STUDENT LIFE

To celebrate the rich (and often hilarious) history of Innis College, we reached out to the Keeper of Secrets himself, Innis's Communications Officer by day and story-keeper by night, the one and only, Ben Weststrate. Here are just some of the stories, facts, and tidbits from Innis's past that he shared with us:

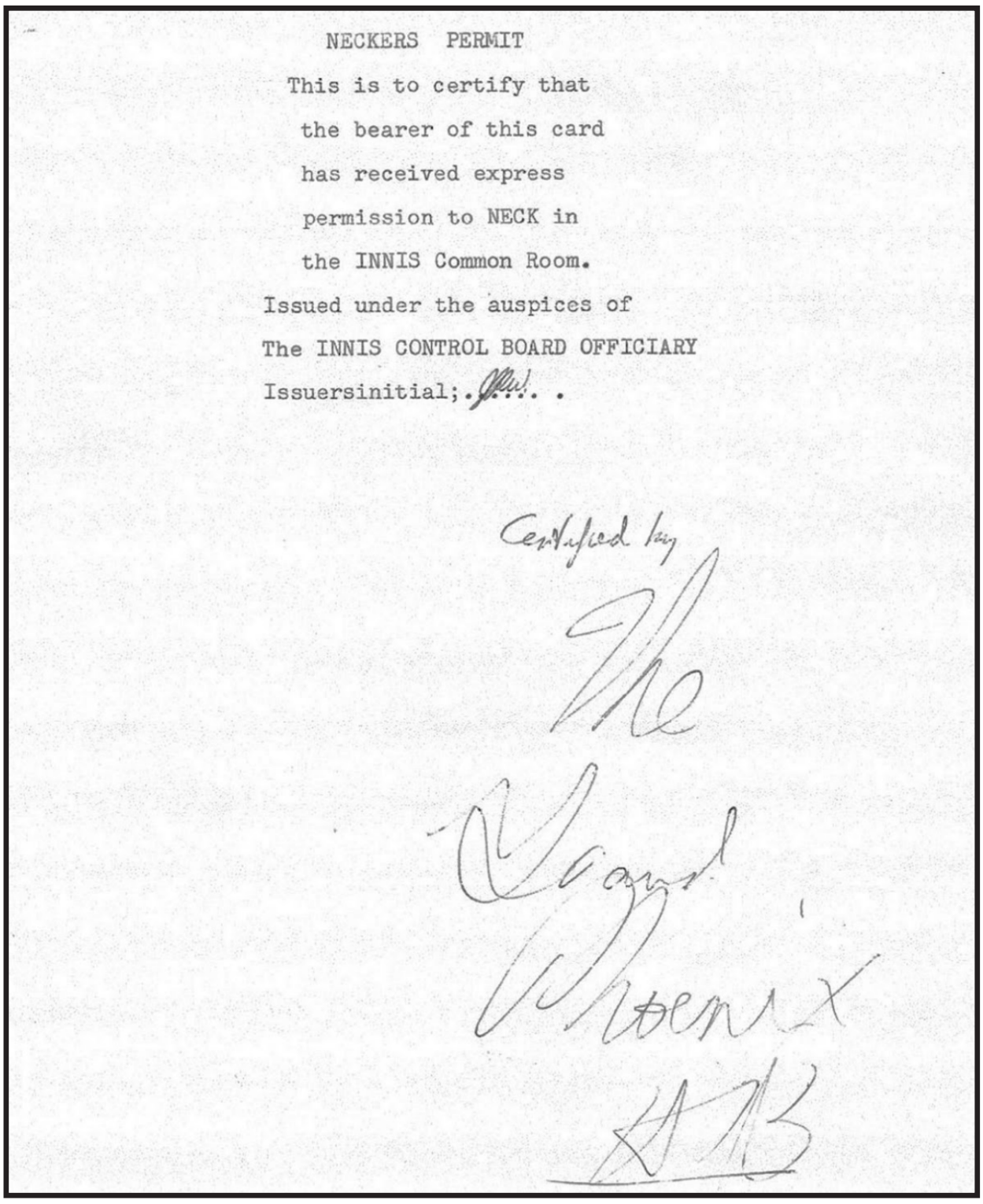
1960s: Innis Control Board Officiary (ICBO)

In the 1960s, the Innis Control Board Officiary was established. ICBO was a tongue-in-cheek organization (read: casual collection) of Innis students who policed the social ongoings of Innisians at their original college home on Hart House Circle. An alum called it "Innis College's response to the engineers' infamous Brute Force Committee." It was led by the "Grand Phoenix" and founder, Hart Broudy.

One of their main tasks was to issue official permits that gave some couples express permission to "neck" (i.e. make out) in the common room.

Alas, the ICBO has long since dissolved, leaving Innis's couples to hide in the shadows for their on-campus canoodling needs. The card is but a relic long past its validity.

(If only the ICSS were to reinstate this beautiful tradition, a Valentine's Day gift to all the lovers out there.)


NECKERS PERMIT

This is to certify that
the bearer of this card
has received express
permission to NECK in
the INNIS Common Room.

Issued under the auspices of
The INNIS CONTROL BOARD OFFICIARY
Issuersinitial;.....

Certified by
The
Grand
Phoenix

1971-72: Ongoing at 63 St. George Street

Here's an excerpt from a report by Principal Peter H. Russell, reflecting and recapping the 1971-72 school year. It's a hilarious glimpse into the life of students at Innis College from fifty years ago! It includes references to the Innis Pub, a kazoo band, and a special hockey game that prized inebriation and incompetence.

"On the lighter side, it was a fine year for the Innis College pub, which discovered draft beer and found even more extraordinary and appropriate ways of celebrating the centennial of Sir John A. Macdonald's home at 63 St. George. The College's artistic life received a lift from the silk-screen operations which went on in the basement and the Kazoo band (a dime-store instrument which sounds rather like a sick soprano duck) which, in the fall, seemed to be carrying on everywhere. The silk-screen operators played a central role in producing the College's new "home-made" brochure. The athletic scene witnessed the usual win and losses but was much enlivened by a new entry to the hockey lists. The Nummies, a team distinguished solely by the fact that none of its members could skate. The video-tape of the Nummies 3-1 loss to the Innis Girls was one of the highlights of this year's cinematic productions at the College. It is, I think, to the credit of Dennis Newman, President of the Innis College Student Society, and his colleagues, that so many diverse activities went on during the year, inheriting as they did such a large deficit from the previous year. They were assisted in overcoming this deficit by the editors of the College newspaper who were public-spirited enough to refuse to publish most issues of the Herald."

1976: The Case of the Kitchen Sink

Innis's home at 2 Sussex Avenue opened on January 9, 1976 (yes, our quirky little building just turned 47). Innis was a young, small, and humble (read: poor) college. The economic downturn of the 70s didn't help. Federal funding had dried up, and Innis was left to fend for itself for many furnishings—right down to the kitchen sink in the Innis Café. The grey pipes lay exposed, longing for a sink to be attached to their ends.

In true Innis fashion, our then 700 alumni, 800 students, and staff rallied together, raised money, and bought that sink. The unspent cash furnished an admission leadership scholarship: the Kitchen Sink Award.

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Elon Musk's Twitter: A Long-Time User's Perspective

Kyle Newcombe
OPINOIN/SCIENCE & TECH

As someone who's interested in politics, finance, and current events, it's perhaps not surprising that I'm an avid user of Twitter. In fact, Twitter was the first social media platform I ever signed up for back in October 2015. Needless to say, it was quite a change when Elon Musk purchased the platform.

Elon Musk first offered to buy Twitter for $44 billion dollars in April 2022. Over the following months, there was much legal back and forth between Musk and Twitter over issues such as user counts and bots, with Elon threatening to back out of the deal. Once Twitter moved to force him to buy the platform as written in the terms of their agreement, Musk decided to avoid a trial and closed the deal at the original offer. He formally took control of the platform on October 28, 2022.

Elon's acquisition of Twitter came at a turning point for the company. While companies like Facebook, Google, and others saw massive gains in their company valuations in the 2010s bull market, Twitter largely traded sideways for the entire time it was a public company. In fact, Elon bought the company for US$54.20 per share, which is lower than Twitter's stock price in December 2013. For some perspective, Facebook's stock has roughly tripled in price during the same time frame, even after it fell 65% from its peak in August 2021.

As soon as Elon took over, it was clear he was going to take a different approach. The velocity of new feature releases has been particularly startling. Users have been essentially treated as beta testers, and Musk himself ran polls asking users for their feedback on new additions. The craziest part? This breakneck product development cycle emerged after Elon cut staff by 64% in three weeks. Those cuts seemed outrageous to many critics at the time, but many other tech companies are also now cutting staff to increase efficiency.

Of course, I can't speak about Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter without discussing his proclaimed primary motivation: free speech. Twitter has a long history of opaque account suspensions and allegations of political bias. While I don't believe the company itself was systematically biased, the employees definitely swung a certain way. Of all the money donated to political campaigns by Twitter employees in 2022, a staggering 99% of it went to Democrats. With employees that almost perfectly align on politics, it was inevitable that conscious and unconscious biases would end up colouring Twitter's content moderation decisions.

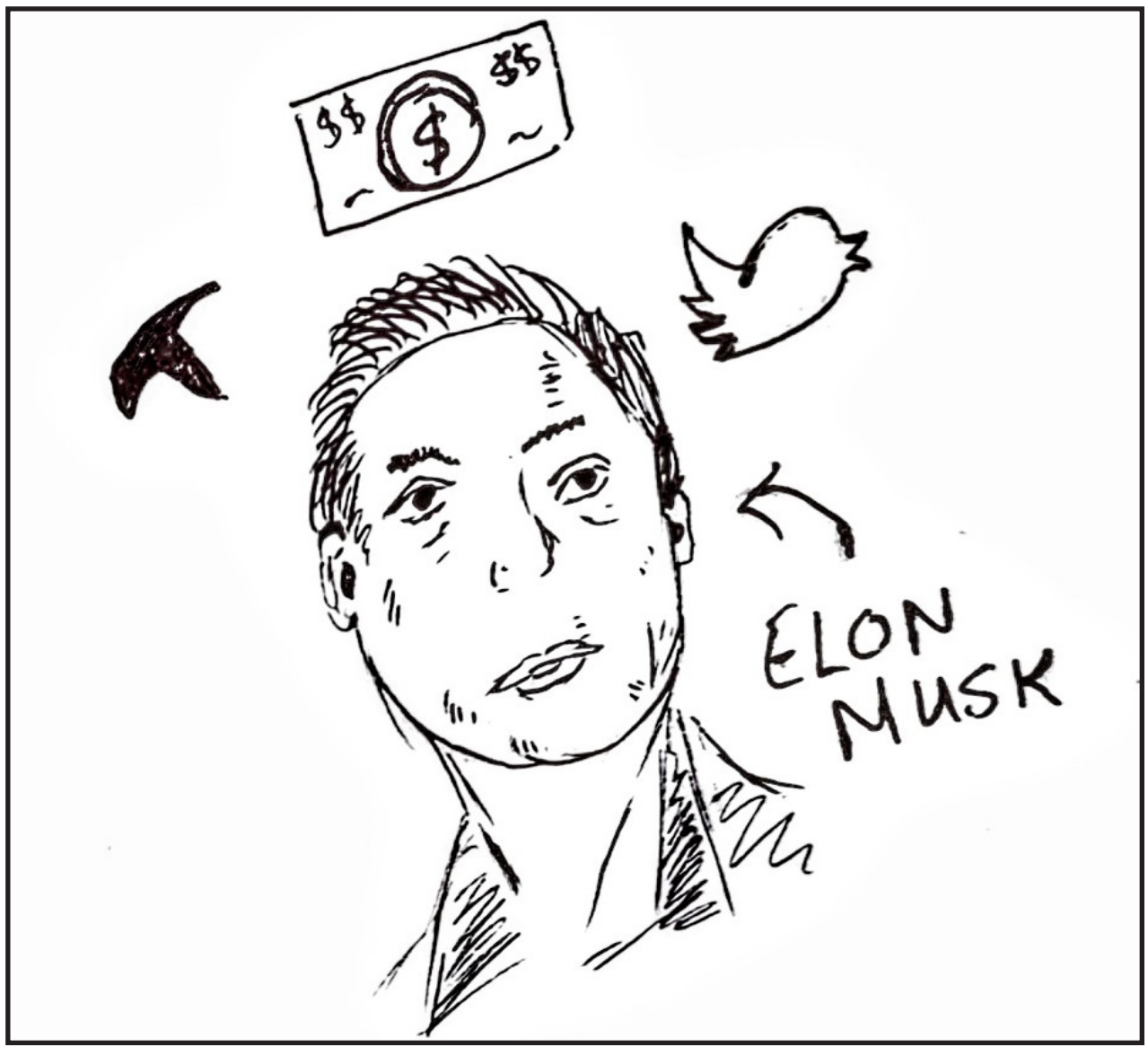
That's exactly what happened with major stories such as Hunter Biden's laptop, which showed that Hunter Biden (President Joe Biden's son) engaged in influence peddling in Ukraine. When the New York Post initially reported the story right before the 2020 US election, Twitter censored it and suspended the *New York Post*'s account. But guess what? The laptop was authentic and not "Russian disinformation" as was reported at the time. Did the censoring of the story materially affect the election? We'll likely never know, but it's hard to deny that there's at least some chance that it did.

Now, thanks to Elon Musk's "Twitter Files," the Biden laptop censorship saga is now in the public view once again. Since taking the helm, Musk has given a select group of journalists access to Twitter's internal communication archive in an effort to increase the transparency surrounding the platform's past actions. So far, findings include that former head of Trust and Safety, Yoel Roth, met weekly with the FBI and Homeland Security; Twitter staff could not justify their own suspension of former US President Donald Trump; Twitter allowed US CENTCOM accounts spreading US propaganda to remain on the platform despite them being in violation of Twitter's own rules; and Twitter "shadowbanned" factual information about COVID immunity.

The Twitter Files have proved that moderation was often downright disastrous at old Twitter, but Elon hasn't been perfect either. He has suspended some of his own critics and even banned the account tracking his jet after saying he wouldn't. I think the key takeaway here is that no single person should be in charge of deciding what speech is "free." As Elon starts to build out his team, I expect the moderation at Twitter to improve and become more even-handed.

In terms of my experience on Twitter so far under Elon, it's been largely the same. To me, Twitter is Twitter, and I believe it's going to remain an important platform in our global conversation.

While Twitter has an order of magnitude fewer users than other social media giants such as Facebook, the kind of people who use Twitter, such as journalists and politicians, are often influential. I also believe that despite some noticeable missteps, Elon Musk is generally taking the platform in the right direction. There's certainly more drama ahead, but I'm not giving up my front row seat any time soon.



Blackish: A History of Canadian Propaganda

Catherine Dumé
POLITICS

With dark skin, plump lips, and thick 3C hair, I fit the description of a Black person. Yet after moving to Quebec from the Caribbean at the age of 8, I lost my Jamaican accent, and with that, my Jamaican identity was replaced by a Canadian one. Living beside the St. Lawrence River, my school trips were mostly visiting historical landmarks of New France such as the Plains of Abraham, the Samuel de Champlain monument, and Le Château Frontenac. As a child, I loved Canadian history. I still do. In hindsight, elementary history glossed over a few crucial details; but I knew it well, more so than the history of my country of birth.

However, that history was nothing but propaganda: that Canada was peaceful, far more noble than its brutal and cruel neighbour.

When it came to Black history, most of it was "borrowed" by American history. Events such as slavery, had an American focus, demonizing the actions of the South. Any mention of Canada mostly surrounded the Underground Railroad and how Canada became the "North Star," the "Land of the Free." Through my elementary lessons, there seemed to be a whitewashing of the fact that Canada enslaved about 1,443 Africans between 1650-1831 and traded timber and fish for tobacco and sugar. I learned that Canada had no 'Cash Crops' such as tobacco, sugar or cotton, so there was no need for implementing a plantation economy; as a result, slavery didn't become as prominent. But it did happen in Canada. Even after abolition, Black people were still treated less than through segregated education, and labor exploitation.

I can list several Black American historical figures such as Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks. Yet the only Black Canadians in history I know, I don't even know by name. The "Black Loyalists" were former slaves who managed to escape to Nova Scotia and were loyal to the British Crown. The phrase has been burned into memory after my drama teacher asked me to be the Black Loyalist in a play because I was the only Black kid.

One would assume when moving to a diverse place such as the GTA, the diversity would be reflected in the history that is taught in school. At first the only difference between my elementary school in Quebec and my middle school in Ontario was simply language. In high school, I learned more about slavery, looking more into the darker

elements. But at the same time, it was refreshing to see a mention of the first successful slave revolt in history — Haiti, my heritage shown in a more positive light. However, there were only brief mentions to Black history, so brief that it didn't stick. Instead, my grade 11 experience was dominated by Indigenous studies. Because of a new policy that was introduced at the time, Toronto school boards encouraged the "proper education" of Indigenous history. This was important as it corrected many of the gaps and assumptions I had about Indigenous peoples. But when it came to Black history, all I can remember is simply a mural of Martin Luther King Jr. — which stood abandoned at our school's entrance for the rest of the semester.

Of course, if I had lived in Black dominated communities, I probably would have learned more about Black Canadian history, legends, figures, and lore. From what I was exposed to in the mostly-white French and English educational system, it is shameful that there hasn't been a bigger push to teach this history in the mainstream. If I, a Black person, had such rudimentary knowledge, imagine what white Canadians know. Only now in university have I been given the opportunity to interact with other Black students as a member of the Black Student Experience Work Group at Innis College and take courses that are specific to the Black experience.

My experience is not unique. According to the Toronto Star, it is clear that Canadians are simply not taught this. It would not be until Pierre Elilot Trudeau, who encouraged diversity and multiculturalism within his policies, that things changed. After 1971, stories about Black people entering white spaces filled the news cycle, giving the false impression that Canada, being diverse, is not racist. It's about time Canada gets off its high horse and recognizes that they are, in fact, not better than the US when it comes to revealing the truth about its Black history. Only through recognition can we expect changes in our educational system.

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Bitter Greens

Clover Chen

PERSONAL ESSAY

CONTENT WARNING: Transphobia, misgendering, a brief allusion to suicide.

The first time I gave myself a T-shot (testosterone) in my thigh, I had my pants down and a mask on. Transitioning over the pandemic was convenient. I wasn't scared of the needle if the mask could hide my grimace; I wasn't scared of transitioning if I couldn't see how people would react.

During the lockdown, I didn't see my extended family, except for a Zoom call for my mother's birthday. My brothers and I were ushered into the living room to greet our virtual guests. I was already anxious as we huddled around the screen. As faces began to pop onto the call, I did my best to say hi, act normal, act cool, but I know that every time I spoke, my voice gave me away.

In front of everyone, my aunt called me out: "That's not your voice. That's your brother's."

She was sure we were playing a prank on her, and I tried to assure her that I was the one speaking. My body flooded with adrenaline when she insisted, "I'm not stupid. I'm sure. You're lip syncing! Someone else is speaking for you!"

She continued contradicting me, and I started to feel a buzz in my palms, a grey in my chest. My fight or flight kicked in, my breathing shallowed and quickened, and I started to feel outside of my own body. If I lost my cool, I knew she'd pick a fight. I would be too sensitive, too offended, too aggressive, and too immature. Instead, I escaped as soon as the call ended to break down in my room. I was too weak to defend myself. Was I not proud of who I am? I curled into the fetal position and stared at a scuff mark on the wall, trying my hardest to cry. I've only been able to cry three times since I started T therapy.

When I was much younger, I loved watching this same aunt put on her makeup. I'd sit on a stool beside her while she showed me her eyeshadow palette and explained which colours she chose and why. When she finished, she asked me to tell her: "你好美你最美了" "You are so beautiful, you are the most beautiful!" in Chinese, and she'd feign humility in response, "Oh, stop, stop. You're too kind."

In our check-in conversation at the beginning of this winter, my girlfriend asked me how I was feeling and how she could support me since December is usually difficult for me. In the past, the jolliness of the holidays felt like spit in my face while my mental health was at its lowest. The winter months bring my birthday as well, and I usually spend every birthday certain it will be my last. But this season, I started off my winter break optimistic and hopeful. My mental health is the best it has been in years, and my girlfriend and I had just celebrated one year together.

For my birthday this year, my family gathered in person. My grandma, my 婆婆, made dinner, and on the table were all my favourite dishes that she remembered from the last time we spoke: squash and taro with short ribs, a beef tendon carrot stew, bitter greens. I don't remember their names in Chinese. When my grandma asked me a question over dinner, I accidentally answered her in French. Are second languages stored in the same area of the brain? (I have a streak on Duolingo. I feel ashamed when people ask me which language I'm learning, and I answer Chinese.)

I left dinner feeling exhausted, my energy drained. I cried into my pillow, cracking in a way I haven't cracked since high school. I breathed through my mouth, stared at the ceiling—blank and a little off-white—and my body was a stark digital negative against my familiar room. Did something happen over dinner? I couldn't remember. I couldn't store my memories properly. My body absorbed them like a dish sponge. I felt heavy, sodden and smelling of mildew.

With my family, I'm forced to confront myself. How their memory remembers me and understands me is so different from my self-perception. And yet, while my grandma calls me 妹妹 ("little sister"), I still call myself my little brother's 姐姐 ("older sister"). I find myself wishing I knew what those dishes are called in Chinese. I wish I knew how to cook them.

I spent the rest of my winter break surrounded by my family. I imagine revisiting your high school long after graduating would feel the same way; everything eerily pedestrian, smiling at memories that no longer fit. My aunt continues to misgender me, and I feel it in my body every time. ~Pronouns!~ are a hot topic for internet debate, sometimes trivialised, but I feel a grating rasp across my chest every time the wrong pronoun is cast onto me by someone I love.

I am strong because I must be. I am smart because I care too much. I constantly question my behaviour to be as considerate and safe as possible for the people around me. I am glad I do this, but I wonder how my aunt must feel being able to always confidently declare what she believes to be true. How free! (And how different from me; I have learned to be hesitant and cautious, distrustful of any absolute truth.) There must be a certain joy in that ignorance, I imagine. There must be a joy in being able to say every thought without the effort of picking it apart. If my aunt's joy is a vicarious act for me, does it verbalize every doubt of my own gender identity? Expose every thought I could never say about myself? I know how she must feel; unable to conceptualize me. I barely believe myself, sometimes.

By the Lunar New Year, the winter break is long over and the semester has started. It's difficult to schedule and coordinate with my family since I'm in the city for school, so I find myself alone on New Year's Day. I make myself dumplings for breakfast. I eat them with my 婆婆's (grandmother's) chili oil. I think they're delicious.

i'm TOO Sexy FOR THIS ELECTION

Self-nomination for The Innis Herald Masthead elections will occur March 6-17.
Voting will take place March 20 - 27.
Open to all U of T students.
Follow @theinnisherald on Instagram for updates.

Strangers to friends to… lovers?

Miran Tsay
CREATIVE

what are we?

The dreaded more-than-friends less-than-lovers line everyone seems to hate but also enjoy walking. Situationships are when it's not platonic between two people, but you're also not an official couple. Perhaps she still talks to her iffy ex. Or you've got too much on your plate. Or they are your first choice and you're sitting on delivered. For some reason, there's a…situation. The relationship between you and your love interest isn't clear cut — certainly not enough for a label.

These days, situationships are left, right, and center. Tinder's 2022 Year in Swipe reported a 49% increase of youth (18-25) adding "situationship" to their bios, wishing to develop an ambiguous relationship without the traditional pressure. With increasingly higher and higher standards being enabled by social media and the mix-up of wanting a special someone instead of a specific someone, it makes sense that people shy from the commitment.

it's complicated: pt 1 - the fear of it all

The vague nature of a situationship allows for more flexible boundaries — you're not required to tell her every time you go to a party, monogamy and being exclusive is up in the air until it isn't, and best of all: no commitment. No feelings… right?

Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian philosopher, wrote: "Falling in love is really just too traumatic. Because your life will be totally ruined. We are too narcissistic to risk any kind of accidental trip or fall. Even into love." We value our autonomy, the thought that we don't care and therefore they don't have power over us, our freedom to kiss anyone.

Being vulnerable with anyone — in bed or about your utmost passions — is a risk. A question: can I show you a part of me and will you accept it? Will you turn away?

The potential rejection is more than enough to stop people from opening up in the first place. From messaging first to asking them to be official, humans shy away from what hurts. We are self-preserving creatures. Fear of commitment and feelings encourage us to seek ways to leave (regardless of if that's what we really want). Establishing a situationship before anything else can get its foot in the door is a shield, a precaution, a messy defence system.

it's complicated: pt 2 - "friend" requests

Everything means something. They've left you on delivered for five hours but are active? They've got 76 Spotify followers who are girls? They still have their ex posted? Oh, but it's all on a case-by-case basis.

Social media allows for people to be in contact 24/7, but talking to your partner (official or not) constantly is not healthy. It's draining. It eats into your free time, makes it easy to give away time meant for *you*. You are primarily your own person, not their talking stage.

A brief scroll on Tiktok can expose you to radically different types of relationship-related content, from a cute prompposal to a breakdown of attachment styles to a girl telling a storytime about her last horrific breakup. The presented perfection of other relationships makes you question your own — or your lack of one. If they have that, why don't I?

The impossible standards are detrimental to any type of relationship. Expectations should be made by the ones involved with each other, not pixels on a screen.

it's complicated: pt 3 - wanting to be wanted

We are simultaneously told to love ourselves and that we are unlovable through social media, everyday conversations, and our own brains. The question of being desired, whether platonically, romantically, or sexually, is always breathing down your neck.

Knowing someone loves or wants you lets you know it's *possible*. You're appreciated, for one reason or another.

But when you get involved with someone just to get involved, not to get involved *with them* — then you'll be inevitably disappointed. They might want to hear about your day, but they're also unaware of their privilege. They're not just someone to steal a jacket from, they've also got intolerable friends and are late for everything. Chasing the experience instead of someone you're in love with will undermine the significance of being able to hold their hand.

People are people, warts and all. Jumping into a situationship just for validation, for attention, for companionship will only end up in someone leaving again.

for the plot vs for your sanity

Navigating the minefield of relationships is not easy. The reasons why the ambiguity of situationships are appealing have existed long before the label did, and caution around relationships will never fade — handing someone a part of you is terrifying.

Regardless of what you're looking for and the exact nitty-gritties, it only takes one — one person who is willing to try with you. However, the sea is rocky, so don't force your ship one way or another and have to watch the crash from the backseat. It's alright to stay on dry land, and it's also alright to take the jump and brave a situationship. At best, you'll find someone who makes the risk worth it, someone who's on the same page as you, and at worst you'll have a good story.

The Islands of Happiness

Rishibh Prakash
POETRY

Ahoy dear captain and welcome on board
Here is your hat and here is your sword

The islands of happiness are the first stop
We'll be there quite quick with a jump, skip and a hop

Quite a place, you've described it to be
A place full of happiness and joy and glee

Where people are happy and lead happy lives
There are happy husbands and very happy wives

The children are happy going to happy school
Where summers are happy and winters are too

Where frowns are frowned upon
and smiles are miles long

It took but a day for the isles to appear
Just up ahead, so very, very near

Yet the faster we move the further they seem
Standing on the horizon, so brightly they gleam

There remain other ships, braving the seas
All heading to the islands, like pods of peas

"Why do others reach the isles with such great ease?
Are the islands of happiness not destined for me?"

You look to the horizon and harden your gaze
You start growing angry, fearing your ways

You curse and you scream, telling us we failed
"What're you doing? Have you never sailed?"

You storm into your room and lock yourself in
And like an old friend, a storm rolls in

For days and days the waves toss us around
Some of us very nearly drowned

Then, the wind grew quiet and the waves were calm
And you came out, with your head in your palm

You said you were sorry for everything you'd done
"I didn't mean a word of it, not a word, not one."

You are our captain and we love you still
It's water under the bridge, or the boat, if you will

And we start the repairs, as you help with a smile
It's quite wonderful, haven't seen it in a while

The work takes days, as we knew it would
But it doesn't seem as bad as it really well should

Because the days were clear and the stars were bright
We even had a day when we flew high a kite

The isles seemed no closer, but we didn't mind
For a beautiful bird, we had managed to find.

Inspired by CGP Grey's YouTube video: "7 Ways to Maximize Misery"

when we were little

Annie Liu
POETRY

When we were little
the most bitter taste we knew
was the black coffee
mommy and daddy drank
at the kitchen table. Every morning

the steam fogged up daddy's
glasses, so we could not see
the red in his eyes before
the caffeine brought him back
to life. Every morning

the colour stained mommy's
teeth. Distracting us
from the strain in her face
when she stretched her mouth
to smile. Every morning

we peered over our placemats
and wondered
when we could be
like mommy and daddy
Knowing. Responsible.
Slouched
over their coffee cup. Many mornings

.
.
.

we plucked white hairs and flower petals bare
stocked up eye drops, replenished tears
massaged out cheekbones, practiced grins
we laid out torn
envelopes like the lilies
over mom and dad
at the kitchen table

steaming over our eyes
staining our teeth
we savoured the sweetness
of black coffee
every morning

a poem about all the times I've tried to write a love poem

Annie Liu
POETRY

There's nothing I can say about love
That has not already been said
Before me, a thousand "greats"
Before me, a million dead.

So, what use of me to say a rhyme
Special just for you?
When before I breathed, countless times
Others did my dues.

But here I'll try, although in vain
To have my love poem fill
With more than twice the bumbling
And less than half the skill

Love is - ...
Love feels-...
Love-...
....

Shit.

Am I cute?

Rosa T. Mancuso

PERSONAL ESSAY

Her knee scrapes against the uneven pavement. She inhales sharply.

She tries to catch her breath before she is caught. Hollers and shrieks bounce off the brick walls. Her lungs feel like they are about to cave in. A barrier rises in her throat. She closes her eyes and focuses on the pain in her knee. At this moment, she would give anything to be able to run just a little bit faster, just enough to catch up to the slowest of them. She peeks out from behind the garbage bin, watching the boys whiz by, up the hill and down the yard and back and forth across the basketball court.

She is shoved forwards, and she catches herself, scraping her hand.

"Got you!"

Her friend stands triumphantly behind her, but not for long. His head flicks upwards, eyeing another runner. He shouts, and bolts away.

Pebbles cling to the open wound on her hand and knee. She rubs her hand on her skirt. She is the first to be caught.

* * *

"She's such a tomboy!" is what my parents say. I wear that word like a gold star; it means I am not like a girl, even though I am a girl. It means I play with the boys at recess but sit with the girls when the teachers tell us the differences between girl bodies and boy bodies.

At home, I am a tomboy because I squish the spiders that crawl on the walls. Mommy says that I am not like a lot of little girls, because a lot of little girls would be too afraid of touching the spiders. Even my brothers are afraid of touching the spiders.

One time at daycare, one of the boys stepped on a caterpillar. Its insides came out in one green blob. The blob was still shaped like the caterpillar. Most of the girls started yelling and running away. It was gross, but I still wanted to look at it; I guess I stayed because I am a tomboy.

* * *

Her smile is plastic. Her cheeks hurt, so she pushes them up with her fingers.

One more flash, and her mother calls, "Okay, now a photo with just the girls!"

She waits for them to gather. Her stomach growls noiselessly, giving the inside of her belly a little poke. She is not sick, or hungry.

The girls—all younger than nine—surround her, in their frilly pink skirts and bedazzled t-shirts.

"You girls look so pretty!" one aunt coos, holding a large camera up to her eye. Her stomach pokes her again. It folds a bit along the edges, wrinkling itself, getting smaller and smaller. She wonders how she will muster the willpower to eat cake. "One more picture, girls!"

And with that, her stomach crumples and attempts to lodge itself in her small intestine.

* * *

For my Grade Eight graduation, I wear a strapless dress and short heels. My mom insists on curling my hair into little ringlets, although I tell her that I would rather just wear it natural. My grandmother calls me "pretty." My teacher makes a joke about how scandalous it is that I am baring my shoulders.

I keep tripping in the heels, or sinking into the grass. I feel more like a hippo on stilts, trying to fit in amongst the giraffes; I am wobbling, trying to reach the leaves at the tops of the trees, tilting on the stilts until I have toppled over.

"Say 'cheese'!"

* * *

She keeps bugging her parents for new clothes. Every time she goes to the mall, she eyes pressed suits and tuxedos, shiny flat shoes, bow ties and neckties.

She argues back and forth with her parents: she cannot wear a suit to a wedding, she cannot wear men's shoes, she has to wear shiny jewelry, she is not fancy enough, *take that tie off right now, young lady*!

But she is a tomboy, not a young lady. She has no problem with the spiders, neither their spindly legs nor their beady little head-eye conglomerates. These days, she is a bit more sympathetic to the micro-intruders, but *someone* in her household has to, as they say, "wear the pants," on occasion.

She tells everyone that she wants to wear pants. In dresses, she feels exposed, ogled at, trapped. She cannot run with the boys in a poofy skirt because it will blow in the wind. She shops in the men's section of retail stores with her own money. She takes each parental protest as it comes. She takes hit after hit, name after title, "girl," "woman," "young lady," "princess," "bella," all meaning well but all cutting just a little bit deeper. Now, even "tomboy" carries a sharp edge.

Late at night, when the world is asleep, she googles "What am I?"

* * *

An idea dances in and out of my mind for years, pirouetting with other thoughts that have yet to come to fruition. *In ten years I'll do it*, I think, *or after university. In a few years. Next year. Maybe in a few months, when the time is right.*

The time is never going to be right. So I do it.

The stylist spins me around in the chair and gathers my hair in a long braid. "I'll take you to the sink right afterwards for a wash," she informs me, "Some girls freak out if they look in the mirror for too long after the first snip."

I smile again.

"It's okay, I should be fine."

She takes up the scissors in one hand and clasps my hair in the other.

"Are you ready?"

Faced with any other big change, I would be a nervous wreck on the inside. My stomach would churn my lunch into a thick froth, my wrists would ache with anticipation, my face would heat up, my legs would clench in preparation to fight or flee. But here and now, I am more calm than I have been in a very long time.

The stylist does not wait for my response. A few seconds later, I am holding the thick bundle in my hand, then setting it down on the counter in front of me. I take a look at how my hair falls around my face now: a short bob, angular and admittedly very stylish. I laugh. "Hey, that looks pretty good!"

"Quick, quick, don't look," the stylist beckons hastily. "To the sink, now." As she lathers and rinses, my eyelids drift lower and lower. I could fall asleep right here, if not for the fact that I still have more hair to lose today.

* * *

Four years ago, my dad laughed when I said that I would be wearing a suit to prom. Now I sit in his car, in an all-black tuxedo and a bright bow tie, waiting for him to drive me to meet my friends. He took me to a tailor to get the suit adjusted. Even so, he still insists on calling it a "women's pantsuit." I tell him again and again that it is just a suit.

My mom insists on a photoshoot. This time, I do not have to worry about my heels sinking into the grass, because the shoes that I wear do not have heels.

"Say 'cheese'!"

I smile. There is a small click.

My mom looks at the photo. "Aww, honey, aren't you just so cute?"

Cute?

Can a tomboy be cute? Am I *supposed* to be cute? If I am cute, will other people hate me for being cute? Is being cute such a bad thing? What if I want to be cute? What if I hate being cute? Am I allowed to change it? Am I allowed to dress differently? Act differently? All to convince someone that I am not cute? Will I confuse people by telling them that I am not cute? Who decides if I am cute?

Am I cute? Does it matter to you?

Does it matter?

335 km Away

Jade Parks

PERSONAL ESSAY

It is currently 8:48 on a Saturday night, the first weekend after going back to classes. This week has been excruciating, beginning a new schedule and re-acclimatization to the 335 km between me and my family, friends, and partner. Sam, my boyfriend of nearly two years, is currently sitting in a booth with his family at Matty O'Shea's, a local pub in the small town we grew up in. He is out, enjoying whatever drink his older brother has suggested to him while winding down from his laborious work week, most likely hoping to avoid any chat about his investment as an apprentice at a welding and fabrication shop.

Not long into the beginning of the fall semester, we realized just how different our lives were going to be; him, remaining in our small town pursuing the trades straight out of high school, and me, moving four hours away to attend university. With Valentine's Day rapidly accelerating closer I am overtly reminded how difficult the distance can get while living in two different worlds. A world of labour, and another of intellectual trials.

The differences in our worlds quickly translate through to the differences in our schedules. Days are filled with him waking up at 5:30 am, and beginning work around 7:00, while I peel myself out of bed just in time to make it to my 10:00 am class. Despite us working similar hours soon after that, during these hours we were lucky to receive a text at all, either during a lunch break or while quickly replying while walking from one end of campus to another. Our inability to talk often continued into the late night as well. While he was home, I would remain productive in the third-floor cubicles of Innis, attempting to fulfil my quota of work for the day while he relaxed in bed while sending me each TikTok that reminded him of me.

Our days would conclude with him calling me before falling asleep, usually around midnight, while I would remain silent until I unmuted myself to wake him up once done work at some time around 3 am the next day.Waking him up has become a task likened to pulling the sword from the stone: a discouraging struggle of me yelling through the call, spam texting him to vibrate his phone, and even learning how to use the keypad to play songs to bring him to consciousness (specifically *You Are My Sunshine*).

The disconnects in our schedules would be easier to manage if it wasn't for the distance between us which it accentuates. Not being able to talk before bed is one thing, but he isn't there for a hug, or when I'm breaking down over midterms. I can't go out with him and our old friends on a Friday night, and he wasn't there beside me on the day I turned eighteen. When each of these painstaking aspects of the distance and difference unite, I begin to wish I could stop loving him. Apathetic retreat seems so much simpler than enduring four years of pain. Yet regardless of the torment, I could not stop loving him if I tried. Every bit of me that misses him begins to disappear when I see him again. The moments in films when the protagonist runs to their partner at the airport cannot match the relief that I get when I sprint into his arms in Union Station just to feel him and smell his cologne again.

Knowing that there is an end in sight is what keeps us going, knowing I will see him in a week gives me hope. It is that prospect and the love that combine to make every solitary moment and each missed kiss worth it. We are allowed a wonderful privilege of individuality, an aspect some relationships lack. Despite the difference in schedule and the distance between us, we still thrive. Not because we are two halves of a whole, but because we are two complete individuals in two different worlds who are lucky enough to occasionally enjoy each other's company. Even from 335 km away.

Diary of a Chronically Online Undergraduate

Em

PERSONAL ESSAY

Why do I post a meme I found funny to my "close friends" story instead of sending it directly to a friend? How many times have I pretended to be on my phone when I am nervous at a party? How many times have I sat next to someone in my lecture and not spoken a single word to them? I can't even excuse my silence for being studious or stoic because my hand is constantly itching to check my phone for notifications. Besides, how am I supposed to focus on a lecture if there is no Subway Surfers-Family Guy clip running in the background??

What does it mean to have individuality in the age of social media? What does it mean to have human connection in the age of social media? I find myself precariously wishing to delete my social media accounts, yet I am never able to commit to it. How would I meet new people? Sometimes it feels like I recognize more people on campus from Instagram than from forming genuine connections with them. But I think a more pressing issue is: How would I know what to consume in order to relate to others?

I crave individuality and acceptance simultaneously and juxtaposingly. One must study how to be unique and interesting, yet not be so obscure that they're perceived as a social outcast. Internet micro-trend algorithms provide "solutions" for this, of which I will provide examples.

Are you a Neon Genesis Evangelion-enjoying, Doc Martens-wearing, left-leaning, Oat Milk drinker? How about a Patrick Bateman-esque, Radiohead-listening, Murakami-reading, "real" "sigma"? What about a Phoebe Bridgers-listening, green juice-drinking, pilates-enjoying, Gilmore Girls-watching, journaling "clean girl"?

If I fell into any of these categories, would you know what kind of person I am? Would you be right? Would you actually know me, or am I a stranger to you still? Would you think we could be friends based on these indicators that I have given you? Would you create a fictionalized version of me, similar to the way you would if I were an online persona?

I once went out with someone who told me that they'd been "bragging" to their friends about how they'd found "a girl who likes Breaking Bad and Elliot Smith." On another occasion, someone in my tutorial told me that I "looked like I listened to Taylor Swift," and their companion quipped, "Or Björk." I was floored. Sure, I desire connection, but at what cost? Am I to be reduced to a Tik-Tok algorithm hashtag? Have I ever even had an original thought? Where on earth is that damn Subway Surfers-Family Guy clip to help me through this??

Even as I write this, I have no answers to my dilemma (or rather, no Subway Surfers-Family Guy clip to help me focus on a solution). I suppose I wanted to write something personalized, rather than academic, to better capture the issue of isolation and lack of identity within Gen Z (since I know we may be sick of listening to our parents tell us that our phones are the problem, and sure they may have a point but it's never pleasant to hear it from them). Perhaps someone reading this paper may stumble across my lament and feel less alone.

Postal Codes

Ola Kim

PERSONAL ESSAY

If you enjoy ambient music, I suggest listening to Homesick and/or Stick Season, both by Noah Kahan, while you read (my roommate recommended the latter song to me, and whether close or far from home, a certain solace can be found in not being there, together).

Toronto is the fourth biggest city in North America, the signage in my elevator tells me, and I certainly feel it now. A city built by British colonizers on the bones of Seneca and Huron-Wendat villages, long streets and networks of buildings and people and languages; when I squint, I can almost pretend that I'm back home. Frequenting Chinatown, lingering on Dundas and Spadina, letting Cantonese and Putonghua float through my ears and feeling something deep in me rewarded, a reminder that still I'm on the same planet as what feels so far away now. So many people I love are deep down in the ground, all the way through the earth.

If I close my eyes I can pretend the TTC is the subway back home, but the loudspeaker announces two languages too little and I don't know what corner of the city I emerge from when I clamber out of the station. My roommates and I tell each other we're coming home to the apartment, but when they say they're going home for Christmas, we all know what that really means. Could *I* go home for Christmas, true home? Is a flight halfway around the world really worth it? I've heard that Toronto is fun this time of year. I've also heard that my cat is waiting for me to warm her bed, all the way across the Pacific.

I watch people walk their dogs, step from concert halls, watch their lives unfold and wonder how it must feel to be a local in this sprawl of a city. I walk along the streets pretending I have a life of my own, trying to prove my place in this city to absolute strangers; the woman I passed on the road, the girl who complimented my hair, the waitstaff who made me a sandwich, the streetcar driver. I am not lonely, I have made friends and brought friends with me, but I am certainly alone. I whisper Chinese to myself in my bedroom, worried I'll forget it. Worried I'll forget it all.

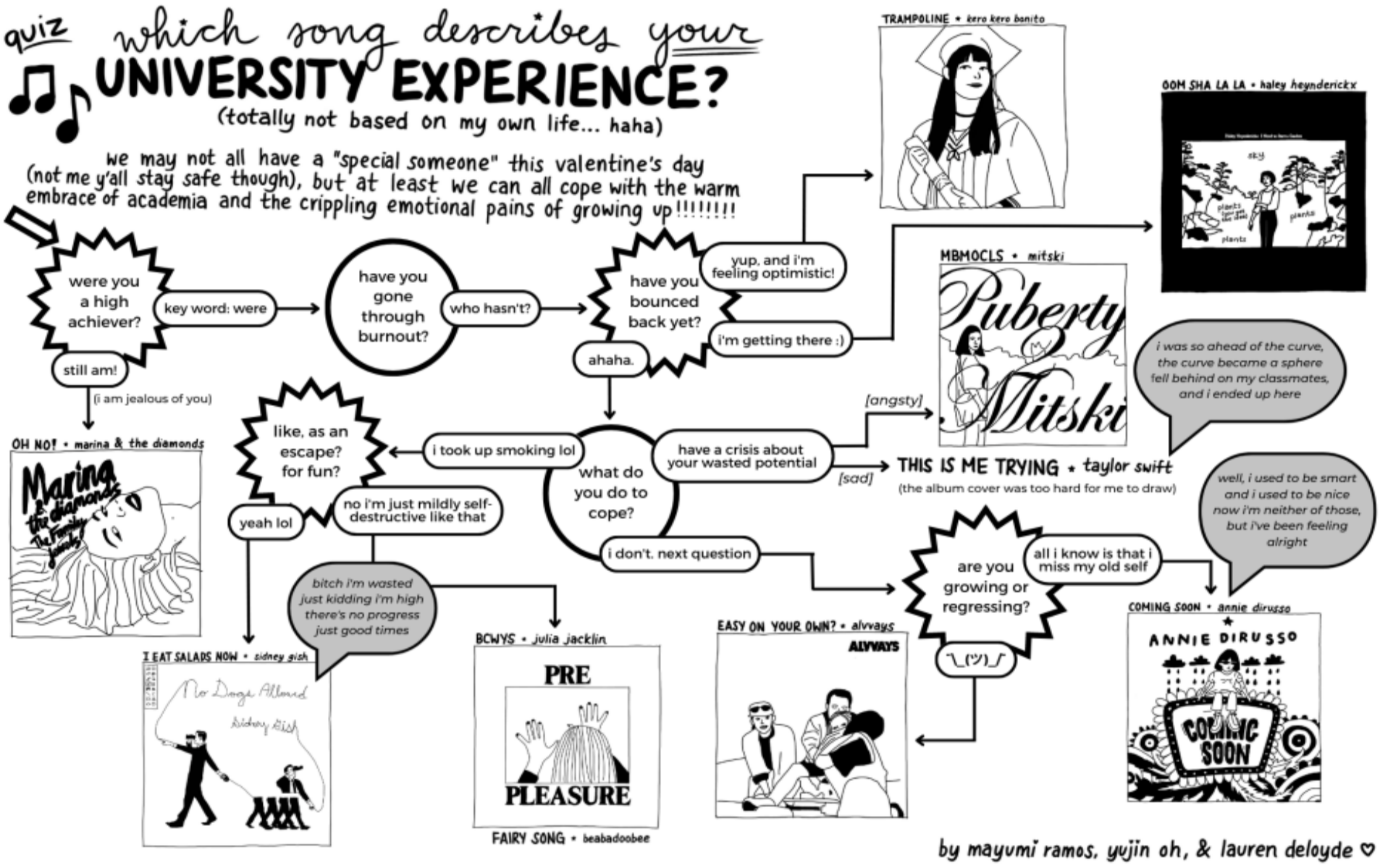
I meet people from home at a frat party, of all places. They went to a high school ten minutes from mine. Now we live in the same building, all the way across the world. Exchanging greetings across a crowded living room with someone who, upon learning where I came from, dragged me across the dance floor and introduced me to his friends as if a place would be enough to bind us, to link us across the ocean. It did. Their phone numbers weigh heavy in my pocket. It is refreshing to know that the difference of a postal code can mean absolutely nothing sometimes.

I remember walking around campus, around downtown with new friends, talking, stumbling through the darkness. Unfamiliar streets, awkward landmarks like breadcrumbs marking our path and laughing all throughout—I had forgotten the thrill of exploring, the thrill of learning to lay down new roots. I chose Toronto before I had even visited: some gut instinct told me that this could be my city. Sometimes, I really feel like it can be. Sometimes all I want is a flight itinerary.

I flew home for winter. The first few days back I was missing Toronto as if my homesickness no longer had a place to go. I suppose aching for a place to lay myself to rest follows me wherever I go—am I torn between two places, or do I have no place at all? Sometimes I feel that I belong everywhere, anywhere I put my mind to. Sometimes my homesickness spreads something frantic, growing up from my feet into the rest of my body whenever I step to new lands, heels crunching into snow, sand, and whatever may follow. Sometimes my urban heart beats tenderly, incessantly. Sometimes it doesn't beat at all.

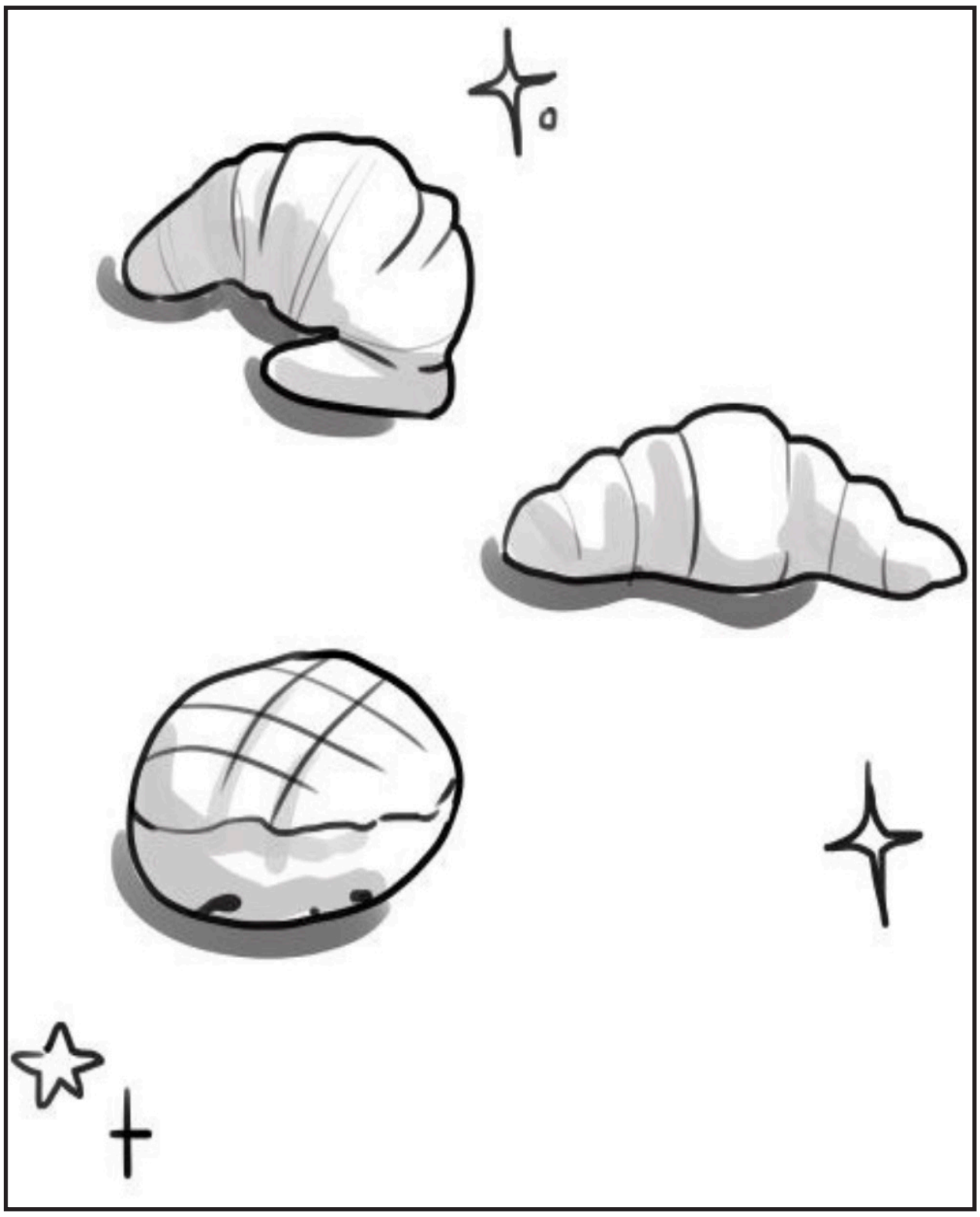
Could I fall in love with this city? Have I already? Or am I just aching for it to be home, aching for it to be something I'm not even sure I miss anymore? Sometimes the difference of a postal code means nothing to me. Sometimes the numbers stretch an expanse I'm afraid I might never be able to traverse again.

It is cold, this night in Toronto. I think I could get used to it.


quiz which song describes your UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE?
(totally not based on my own life... haha)
we may not all have a "special someone" this valentine's day (not me y'all stay safe though), but at least we can all cope with the warm embrace of academia and the crippling emotional pains of growing up!!!!!!!!
were you a high achiever?
key word: were
still am!
(i am jealous of you)
have you gone through burnout?
who hasn't?
have you bounced back yet?
yup, and i'm feeling optimistic!
i'm getting there :)
ahaha.
what do you do to cope?
i took up smoking lol
like, as an escape? for fun?
yeah lol
no i'm just mildly self-destructive like that
bitch i'm wasted just kidding i'm high there's no progress just good times
have a crisis about your wasted potential
[angsty]
[sad]
i don't. next question
are you growing or regressing?
all i know is that i miss my old self
¯_(ツ)_/¯
TRAMPOLINE • kero kero bonito
OOM SHA LA LA • haley heynderickx
MBMOCLS • mitski
Puberty 2 Mitski
i was so ahead of the curve, the curve became a sphere fell behind on my classmates, and i ended up here
THIS IS ME TRYING • taylor swift
(the album cover was too hard for me to draw)
well, i used to be smart and i used to be nice now i'm neither of those, but i've been feeling alright
OH NO! • marina & the diamonds
Marina & the diamonds
I EAT SALADS NOW • sidney gish
No Dogs Allowed
Kidney Dish
BCWYS • julia jacklin
PRE
PLEASURE
FAIRY SONG • beabadoobee
EASY ON YOUR OWN? • alvvays
ALVVAYS
COMING SOON • annie dirusso
ANNIE DIRUSSO
COMING SOON
by mayumi ramos, yujin oh, & lauren deloyde ♡

Taste Test Time - BREAD Edition

Michelle Wong
ARTS AND CULTURE



I'll be completely honest; I love bread, all kinds of breads. Because of my family's love for it, my dad even bought a bread machine and learned to bake himself. With this love for bread in mind, I did some research and googled the top rated bakeries near the UofT campus. Three different kinds of bakeries popped up; Mashion Bakery, Blackbird Baking Co., and Little Pebbles. All three of these bakeries have different styles of baked goods and today we're going to find out if those three top rated bakeries are worth the try!

First on the list, Mashion Bakery, located on 346 Spadina Avenue (Chinatown). It's a Chinese homestyle bakery that sells all sorts of Chinese baked goods. The interior and exterior at first may look old and a bit rundown, but don't let that scare you! It's definitely not a sit-down place, but a grab-and-go place. All of the baked goods are baked fresh daily and you'll see a cart with layers of freshly baked bread. There were so many to choose from and I bought quite a few things, but the one that I decided to do a review on was the Pineapple Bun. It wasn't fresh out of the oven, but that's okay; microwaving the bread for 10-15 seconds again makes it all soft and warm again, just like it was fresh! The Pineapple Bun had a perfectly sweet and flaky crust. The bun itself was soft and fluffy, the bottom was a bit crunchy and it was such a filling lunch. The best part? It was only $0.80, and if you buy six or more, it's tax free! I bought a total of 7 baked goods and it came down to $10.10. This place is perfect for buying a lot of baked goods to stock up for the week.

Next, we have Little Pebbles, located on 160 Baldwin Street #8 (Kensington Market). It's a Japanese style cafe/bakery with all sorts of specialty coffee, drinks, cakes, and baked goods. It's a small little cafe, limited spots to sit but they have happy hour there, and it's a very aesthetic place; walking in gave off the coziest vibes! If you look closely behind the cashier, you can see a cart with multiple stories of baked goods as well. Little Pebbles has limited supplies of each item everyday, and they have seasonal drinks as well. I tried the butter croissant, which was so good for $3.00 (not including tax). Buttery, slightly sweet, fluffy, soft and has a slightly charred flavour. This croissant is perfect as a dessert croissant! They have croffles (croissant waffles) and croissants with whipped cream and fresh fruits in them. I was able to eat the croissant immediately after purchase and it was so flaky. I absolutely loved how buttery the croissant was and it was so simple. I would definitely go back again with a friend to sit down, try out one of their specialty drinks and even buy a slice of their cake.

Lastly, Blackbird Baking Co. This modern, simple bakery is located on 172 Baldwin Street (in Kensington Market as well) and it's not a sit down place as well. The vibes are immaculate and you immediately get surrounded by the smell of baked bread. On the left side of the shop, there is a shelf filled with things like bags, chocolate and so forth of their brand products. You can see behind the cashier there is a shelf of an assortment of bread and they even have a glass display of it as well. I bought a croissant there as well for $3.75 and it was absolutely delicious: I think scrumptious is the best word to describe it honestly. The croissant is more towards the savoury side. It was extra flakey and buttery, and had a chew to it. It's definitely more of a dinner/lunch croissant and it's on the bigger side. An honourable mention from Blackbird Baking Co. would be the pain au raisin. It was so good and tasted like a mix of a croissant and bread. It was glazed lightly with sugar and had raisins on the inside: a must try if you like raisins!

Bingeable Books and Book Adaptations - Romance Edition

Rebecca Sacco
ARTS AND CULTURE

Valentine's Day comes around each year and people either love it or resent it. For most of us it's a day that really makes you feel single if you're single and if you are in a relationship, it makes you feel the pressure of making the day special. Whatever category you fall into, here are three book to film adaptations that may help you with your Valentine's day.

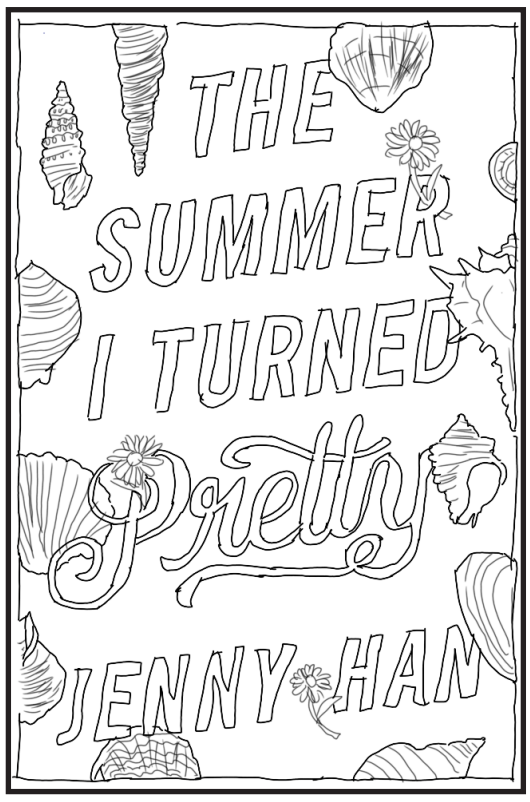
The Summer I Turned Pretty

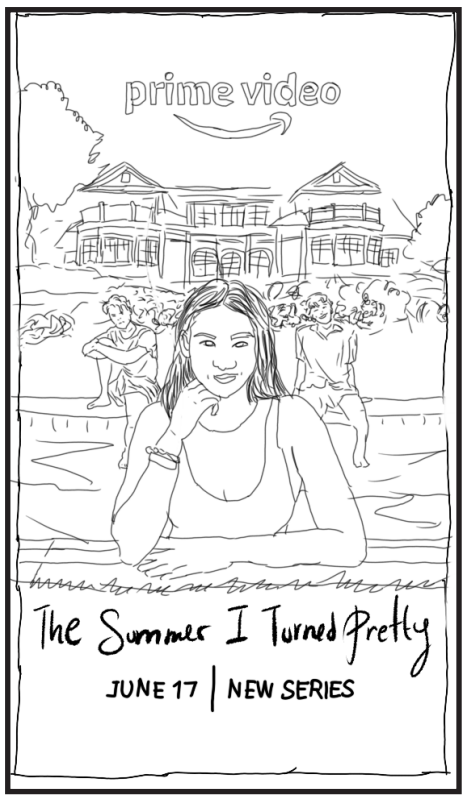
If you're trying to hide away from the cold and be transported back to the hot summer months, The Summer I Turned Pretty is the series for you. Following Belly as she navigates friendships, family tensions and first love. A story that transitions between past and present day allowing the reader/watcher to understand Belly's relationships evolving.

The Summer I Turned Pretty book trilogy creates intense feelings of first love, crushes, and heartbreak, and ultimately portrays the dramatic feelings of being a teenager. The moments between characters are sweet but also intense at times. This is a young adult book that touches on first love, heartbreak, and friends falling out.

The show can be streamed on Prime Video and currently only has season one, with season two in the works. The show encapsulates the book's feelings but adds to each character. We see more of Jeremiah, Conrad and Steven and what they are up to during the summer. The show is easy to binge and has some very sweet moments between the characters.

If you are looking for teenage drama, angst and a "2000s feel" show, this one's for you.





A Walk to Remember

Nicholas Sparks has numerous books and book to movie adaptations that are sad with romantic elements. My favourite one is *A Walk to Remember*. Landan and Jamie's story tore at my heartstrings. The movie focuses on first love and falling in love with an unlikely match. It is definitely a tearjerker, so be warned.

The book however is set in a different time - in the 1950s vs the movie is set in the 1990s, yet Landon describes his love for Jamie in almost the same way as the movie's portrayal. The book is short and easy to binge, but have tissues nearby.

If you are looking for a teenage love story that may make you sob, this one's for you.

When Dimple Met Rishi/Mismatched

Maybe this Valentine's Day you want to see reluctance to fall in love. This is seen as Dimple is reluctant to fall in love and makes it hard for Rishi to win her over. In the book, Dimple and Rishi's story is sweet with facets of first loves. Dimple feels as though she may not be ready to fall in love, but soon realizes Rishi is the one for her. The mesmerizing way someone may make you feel with just a look, the reluctance to fall for those looks, and the feeling of pushing someone away are all captured in this story. The book is sweet and a quick read.

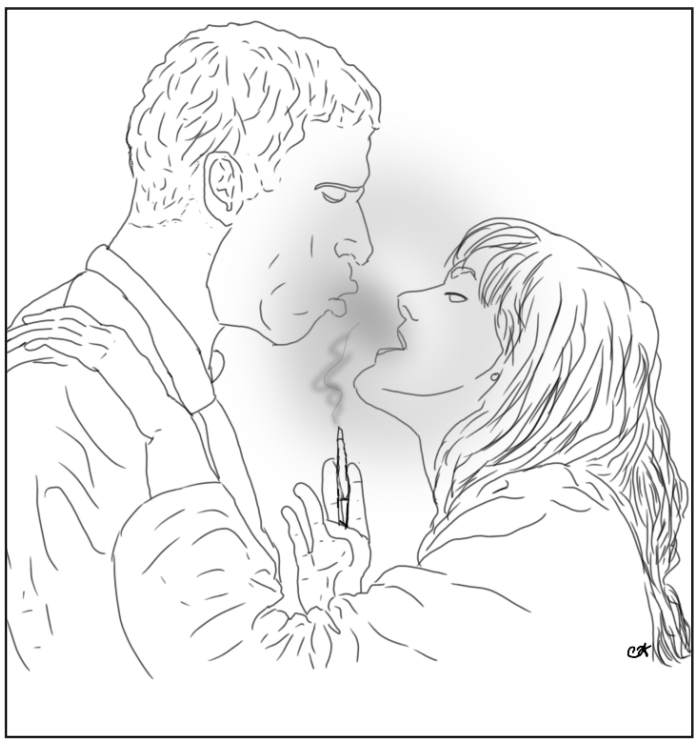
The adaptation can be found on Netflix by the name of *Mismatched*. The title has changed as well as the plot in this TV adaptation, but the main focus of pursuing Dimple is still prevalent in season one and may make you laugh, smile or blush while watching. The show is easy to binge.

SAM'S SHOWTIME SCHEDULE

Sam Guevara
ARTS AND CULTURE

There is no better way of celebrating this time of the year than by being a cinephile. Cheers to the season of romance, or lack thereof. Affection in the air calls for couples to go on dates, significant others to honour relationships, and… taken people to *do whatever taken people do* — more importantly, it calls for a showtime special. Screen these motion pictures that are great third wheels on **date night** and great company for **hopeless romantics**.

This list is a what-to-watch guide for features that — likewise this time of year — propagate romance. Without further ado; a film bro (woman), a movie critic (avid Letterboxd user), a cinema student (undergraduate who minors in cinema), and above all an **emotionally unavailable, emotionally uninterested, emotionally unserious** person presents: ***Really Romantic Recommendations.***



***1. THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD* (2021)**
Dir. Joachim Trier
"I don't want to be a memory for you."

2. GONE GIRL (2014)
Dir. David Fincher
"You think I'd let him destroy me and end up happier than ever? No fucking way."

3. GET OUT (2017)
Dir. Jordan Peele
"You were one of my favourites."

***4.* 春光乍洩*/HAPPY TOGETHER* (1997)**
Dir. Wong Kar-wai
"I had no regrets until I met you.
Now my regrets could kill me."

5. MIDSOMMAR (2019)
Dir. Ari Aster
"Does he feel like home to you?"

6. PORTRAIT DE LA JEUNE FILLE EN FEU/PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE (2019)
Dir. Céline Sciamma
"Not everything is fleeting.
Some feelings are deep."

note from author: disasters including but not limited to heartbreaks, fights, and/or regrets may result upon the viewing of these films and the author is not responsible for the audience's inability to read the room.

Unpacking Wednesday

Sophia Bannon
ARTS AND CULTURE

If you haven't at least heard of the Netflix show, *Wednesday*, you've probably been living under a rock. This eight-episode show is centred around Wednesday Addams, the introverted and gloomy daughter of the Addams family. Wednesday is sent to Nevermore, a boarding school her parents attended. There, she tries to solve a string of killings (scary), while discovering her psychic powers and embarking on the (arguably more scary) quest of friendship and romance.

For Gen Z, *Wednesday*'s appeal is obvious. It combines YA teen media (think *School for Good and Evil*) and Tiktok's current obsession: dark academia, with an unconventional protagonist. Arguably, the most dynamic part of the series is Wednesday herself. By placing Wednesday Addams, a homicidal and reserved character, as the hero of the story, *Wednesday* is challenging the archetypal hero, also known as the 'so morally good it's annoying' and often white and male character. Thus, Wednesday Addams is an excellent example of an anti-hero.

However, Wednesday Addams' characterization as an anti-hero only works because her moral code falls within the realm of 'good'. With most anti-heroes, actions that are perceived as socially unacceptable (such as violence) are justified because the character's moral code aligns with the principles of right and wrong. Wednesday setting piranhas loose on bullies may break societal code, but the audience understands Wednesday does this because the bullies have hurt her family, and thus, we do not view Wednesday as a 'bad' person.

The issue is that *Wednesday* fails to uphold Wednesday's strong sense of justice and moral code. While the first few episodes portray Wednesday as someone who views the world in shades of black and white, (justifying any societally unacceptable behaviours) Wednesday's actions later in the show contradict this. Because of this, Wednesday strays too far across the line between 'good' and 'bad' and becomes a flawed character. The most obvious example of this is the framing of Xavier as the monster that's been terrorizing the town. Wednesday decides that Xavier's paintings and prophetic dreams of the monster, Xavier's coincidental arrivals at the scene of the crime, and his psychiatrist's ability to hypnotize are 100 percent solid proof that Xavier is the monster. Wednesday then decides to frame Xavier by planting evidence.

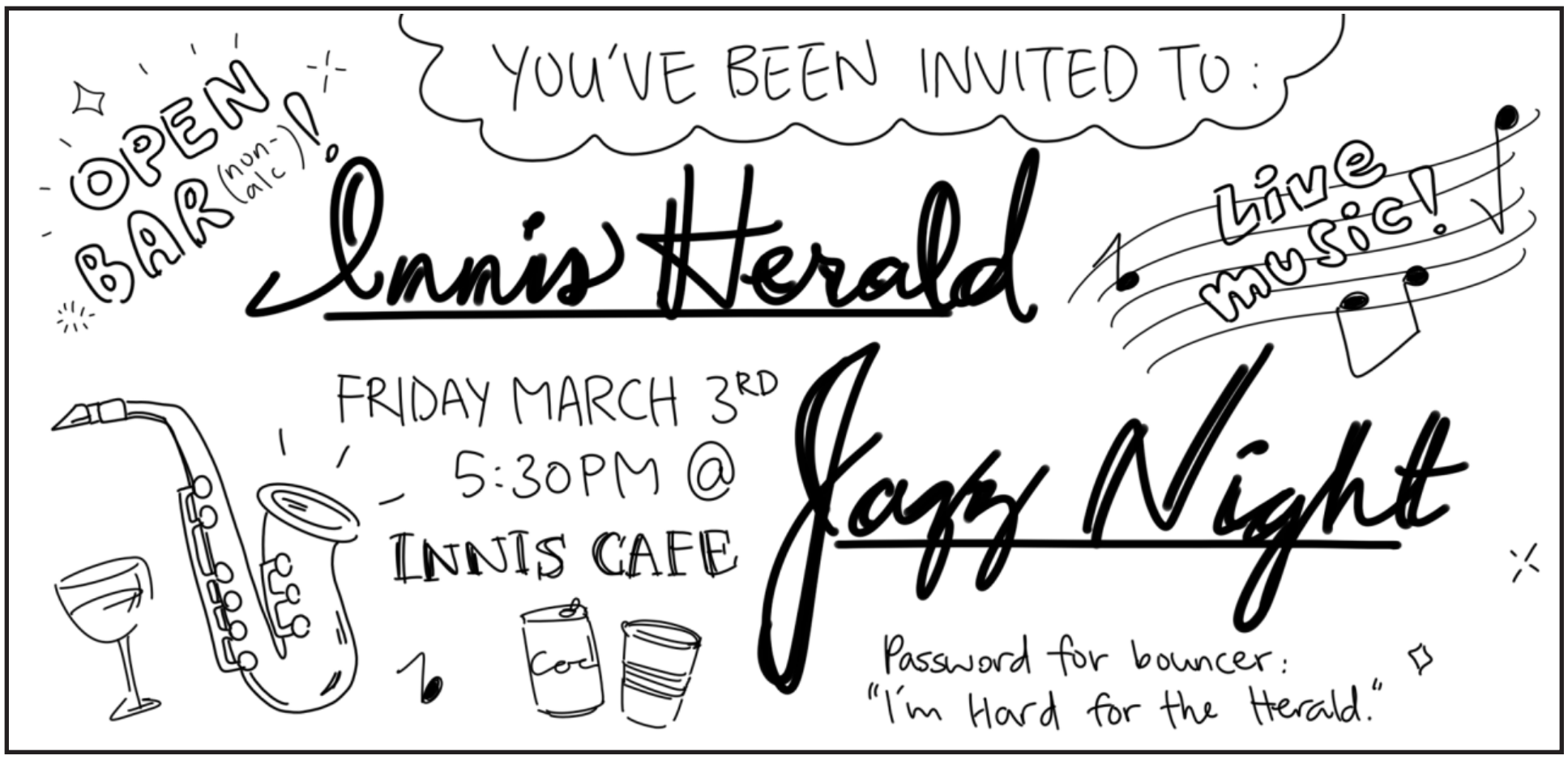
A side note: one thing about Wednesday's 'evidence' is that it also applies to her. She has prophetic visions of the monster, Xavier and Wednesday share the same psychiatrist, and Wednesday is always at the scene of the crime. Perhaps a better end to the show would be for Wednesday to have been the monster.

That aside, the framing of Xavier represents a deviation from Wednesday's character. At the beginning of the story, Wednesday follows very stringent principles of right and wrong. When she framed Xavier, her character developed into someone who strives to achieve justice so much, their own morals have been warped. By compromising her ideals, Wednesday has evolved into a flawed anti-hero.

Having a flawed hero is not the problem here. In fact, many books and shows have flawed heroes; take Rin from *The Poppy War* or Harry Potter (I'm sorry for bringing it up) from *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*. These flawed heroes add depth and nuance to these stories, but only because the authors acknowledge them as flawed.

This is where the creators of the show fail. Instead of having Wednesday recognize that she's harmed people and having her learn from her mistakes, the authors consistently present her as near-perfect. While there are moments when characters do get upset at her, for the most part, she does not always take accountability. For example, after being physically restrained, framed by your classmate, and locked up in a jail cell, something that would be severely traumatizing, Xavier apologizes to Wednesday. This writing decision was so incredibly (*sigh*) wrong, I actually had to step away from the show for a second. A better way to end the show would be for Wednesday to apologize to Xavier, showing character growth and accountability for her actions. Instead, the writers refused to believe that Wednesday could be flawed in any way and denied the audience the character development we so wanted.

Anyways, to the creators of *Wednesday*: you can have flawed heroes!



The Fake Fan's Introduction to the Raptors

Kiran Basra
SPORTS

While older residents of the city will always love the Maple Leafs most, everyone remembers how it felt when the Raptors won the 2019 NBA championship. Kawhi Leonard's series-winning buzzer-beater in the second round of playoffs, Fred VanVleet's miraculous rise to one of the team's best players following the birth of his son, and the championship parade that drew nearly 2 million people downtown have passed into city legend. But if you've been ignoring the team since then, or if you never paid attention to 2019 at all, here's all you need to know to start watching Toronto's best sports team.

(This claim may get me death threats. Please remember that the Blue Jays might keep qualifying for playoffs but haven't won the World Series in three decades, and a dark wizard put a curse on the Leafs back in the '60s and it gets more powerful every year. Also, nobody cares about the Argos.)

43: Pascal Siakam – born in Douala, Cameroon, college New Mexico State, with Raptors since 2016. A forward-centre, Siakam is the only remaining member of our championship starting lineup and was the NBA's Most Improved Player that year. He's been an NBA All-Star and an All-NBA team selectee three times, and is one of the most flexible players on the team. He goes by the nickname 'Spicy P.'

3: OG Anunoby – born in London, England, college Indiana, with Raptors since 2017. A small forward, OG Anunoby currently has the record for the most steals in the league this season, beating the runner-up by more than 10. He's also known for his interesting fashion sense – if you see anyone wearing short shorts or Crocs (or both at once!), it's him.

23: Fred VanVleet – born in Illinois, college Wichita State, with Raptors since 2016. A point guard who began his NBA career in the summer leagues after he was passed over in the NBA Draft, he's since risen to be a 2022 All-Star. Nicknamed 'Steady Freddy' for his free throw and 3-point shooting abilities, he's been an underrated and consistent presence on the team who's improved more each year.

4: Scottie Barnes – born in Florida, college Florida State, with Raptors since 2021. A power forward, Scottie Barnes was picked in the first round last year and the fourth overall draft pick. He won the NBA 2022 Rookie of the Year award. At only 22 years old, he has a long and promising career in front of him, and will hopefully spend a lot of it in Toronto.

33: Gary Trent Jr. – born in Ohio, college Duke, with Raptors since 2021. A shooting guard and small forward. His father, Gary Trent, played in the NBA for nine years, and spent the 1998 season with the Raptors. He has one of the highest 3-point shot percentages in the league, at 41.8 percent.

25: Chris Boucher – born in St. Lucia, college Oregon, with Raptors since 2019. One of the few Canadian members of the Raptors, Boucher grew up in Montréal. A high-school dropout discovered in a community tournament, he was part of the Golden State Warriors' 2018 championship team… and then immediately joined the Raptors and defeated GSW to win the championship again.

Some other important people to know:

Nick Nurse, head coach – he's been working with the Raptors since 2013 and was head coach during our championship year. You can recognize him because he always looks like he's recovering from the flu.

Masai Ujiri & Bobby Webster – these are the men responsible for managing the Raptors. Direct your anger at them when they trade away your favourite players, and remember to thank them when they get us into the playoffs.

Nav Bhatia – a local legend who calls himself the Superfan, this car dealership owner has owned a courtside seat since 1995 and has attended every single Raptors home game in Toronto. Through the Superfan Foundation, he sends thousands of kids to Raptors games.

Drake – having been the Raptors' global ambassador since 2013, whenever he's in the city you can be sure to spot him at one of his courtside seats right beside the Raptors' bench. When the game isn't going well, the silver lining can be watching his reactions.

Static Shock— An International Student Phenomenon

Javid Guliyev

Living in residence comes with many enjoyable and memorable experiences. However, I have noticed a particular phenomenon that has shocked me. I spoke with multiple residents, and many international students reported being frequently zapped when touching certain surfaces like doorknobs or elevator buttons! The commonality among international students made me highly interested in researching this phenomenon. Why do more international students notice cases of static shock in their day-to-day lives on campus than Canadian students?

There are multiple factors that may contribute to static shock without our even noticing. The primary reason for this phenomenon is the distribution of electrons across surfaces at close proximity to each other. You may have noticed that the residential suites have carpeted floors in the bedrooms. While we walk on carpeting, our feet or shoes rub against it. As a result, electrons transfer from the carpet to our body, and this builds up electrons in our body. Then, when we touch conductive surfaces such as elevator buttons, electrons transfer from our bodies to these surfaces. We feel this as a static shock. Given that carpeted flooring is not as common in other places around the world, static shock may therefore seem particularly unusual to and occur at apparently higher frequency for international students.

Another factor that bolsters this effect is the number of layers and pieces of clothing worn during the cold winters here. Toronto winters may be much colder for some students compared to where they came from. More layers worn means more material to rub against each other. Once again, this enables the transfer of electrons from one surface onto another.

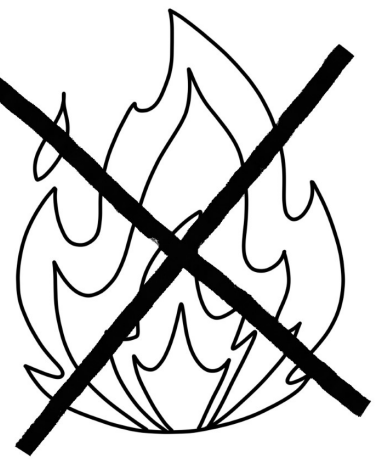
Colder winters also means less moisture in the air. Dry air is a worse conductor of electricity than humid air. This means when electrons are transferred to our body as explained above, it is more difficult for them to escape, since the surrounding air won't pick them up.

Now you know why static shock occurs. So, it should not come as a surprise anymore - until the next time you get zapped by the buttons at the Innis Residence elevator!

Curated by Sam Guevara and Rhea Gosain

WHAT'S HOT

- 2014 tumblr
- mango smoothies
- seeing a therapist
- manifesting with crystals
- making hyper-specific playlists
- the Raptors



WHAT'S NOT

- overpriced concert tickets
- the Maddie Pub washrooms
- dating apps
- z-lib (rip)
- the TTC
- the Raptors

_____ _____,
COMPLIMENTARY ADJECTIVE NAME

For _____ *I've waited in silence, but the time has come to tell you I* [CIRCLE ONE: *have a crush | like | like-like | love | am deeply obsessed with*] *you. I think constantly about that day you*
AMOUNT OF TIME

_____.
ANY MEMORY OF TIME YOU SPENT TOGETHER. IF NONE, MENTION SOMETHING THAT'S NOT TOO CREEPY

I [CIRCLE ONE: *smile | blush | am overcome with desire | want to puke (but, like, in a good way)*] *whenever you enter the room. I long to* _____ *your* _____.
VERB BODY PART (EX. HOLD YOUR HAND)

Together we could: CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- ☐ *Go for coffee*
- ☐ *Read the Herald*
- ☐ *Make out at a party and never speak again*
- ☐ *Netflix and chill*
- ☐ *Get married and start a family*
- ☐ *Enter into a toxic doomed romance*
- ☐ *Die in each other's arms*

If you feel the same way, please _____.
ACTION

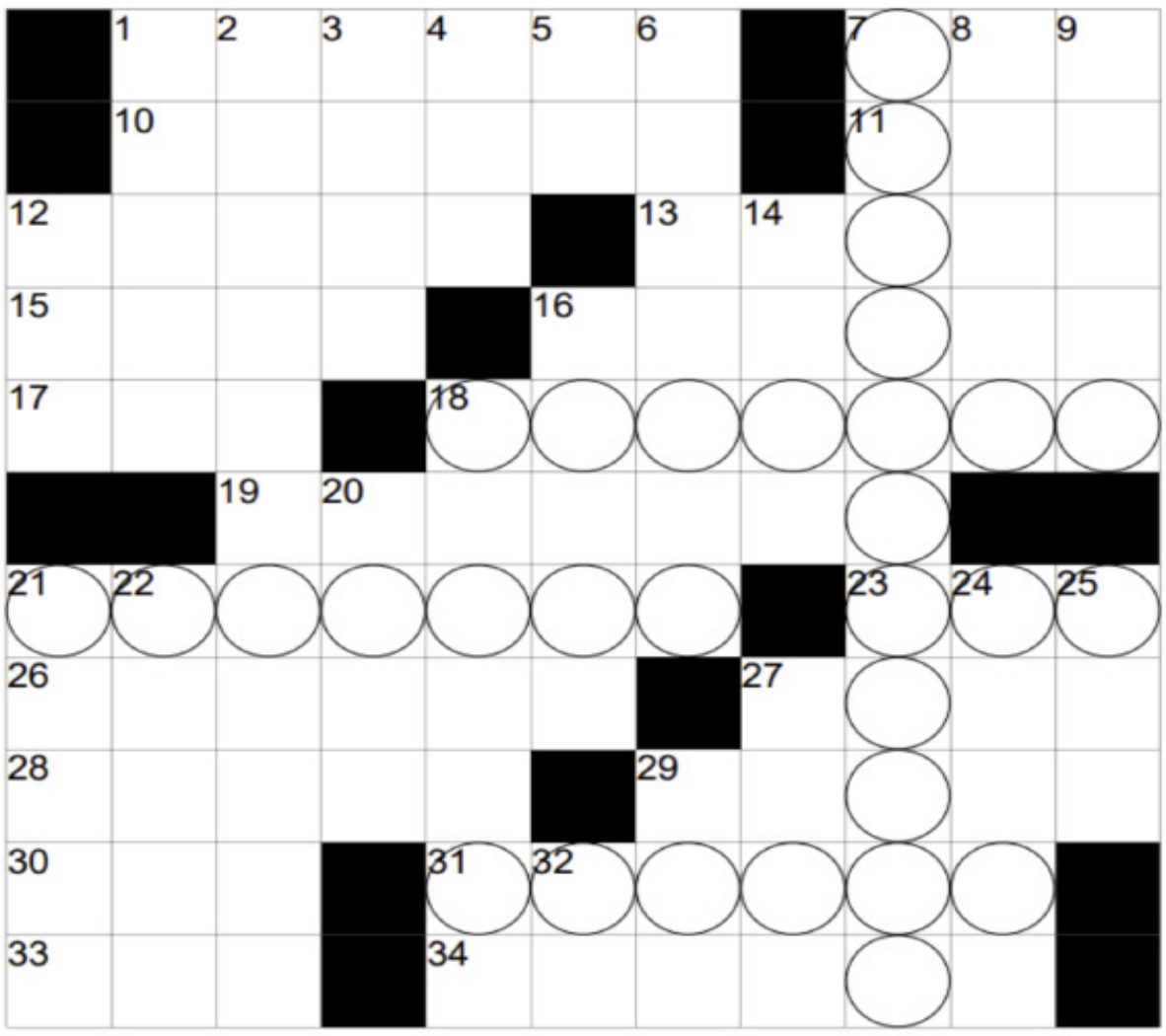
If not, rest assured I shall [CIRCLE ONE: *be respectful | never mention this again | remain your friend | fake my death and disappear forever*].

Your _____ _____,
ADJECTIVE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP

_____
NAME OR ALIAS

Grossest of All Time Crossword

Rick Lu



CLUES

ACROSS:
1. Frozen hat?
7. World banking org.
10. Beach shoe
11. Prefix to “colepsy” or “cissist”
12. Shops
13. Actress Woodard of “12 Years a Slave” and “The Lion King” (2019)
15. Barbecue servings
16. Metamorphic rock with banded texture
17. Altar affirmation
18. Of epic proportions
19. Singer of “Wild Side” and “Dancing with a Stranger”
21. Last portion of a chess match
23. Star Wars entry after ROTJ
26. Start of a letter addressed to oneself?
27. Forms a trinity with magenta and yellow
28. “Don’t let those guys escape!”
29. “___ the time for action”
30. Summer drink suffix
31. Embodiment
33. ___ al Ghul, Batman adversary
34. Like parchment

DOWN:
1. “Because ___ so”
2. Determines the age of a fossil
3. Tolkien tree creatures
4. Circular music storers
5. Type of battery
6. Taxonomic kingdom that includes flora
7. 5th entry on a list that includes the across clues 31, 21, 18, and 23
8. Persian language
9. Gradual incr. in music volume
12. Med. scan
14. Purple drank
16. Childish demand
18. Streetcar diagram, in the UK
20. Creature that is similar to an onion
21. ___ Allan Poe
22. “___ hand?”
24. Tooth collector
25. Part of a Q and A
27. ___ d’Azur
29. Short snooze
32. Org. for former soldiers

(Clues are accurate as of January 2023)

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http://theinnisherald.com/

Winter

Jackie Borland

ANSWERS